

Message Text

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EXDIS

JERUSALEM FOR USDEL

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SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN VIEW OF ISRAELI DEFMIN WEIZMAN

REF: TEL AVIV 1096

SUMMARY: WITH REGARD TO ISRAELI SPECULATION ABOUT WHAT IS BEHIND OBVIOUS PERSONAL PREFERENCE OF EGYPTIAN LEADERS FOR WEIZMAN (PARA 5 REFTEL), WE OFFER FOLLOWING COMMENTS WHICH SUGGEST THERE IS LESS THAN MEETS THE EYE IN THIS MATTER. END SUMMARY.

1. IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT SADAT STRUCK UP IMMEDIATE RAPPORT WITH WEIZMAN IN JERUSALEM. UPON HIS RETURN HE TALKED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CAIRO 02960 270309Z

ABOUT HIM IN WARM, FRIENDLY TONES. THIS AFFINITY HAS APPARENTLY NOT DIMINISHED WITH TIME AND SADAT CONTINUES TO PERSONALLY LIKE WEIZMAN, WHICH MAY WELL HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH EQUALLY FRIENDLY FEELINGS TOWARD WEIZMAN EXPRESSED BY VP MUBARAK, MINWAR GAMASY AND SAYYID MAR'I. GIVEN ARAB PENCHANT FOR PERSONALIZED POLITICS, EXPLANATION MAY BE WEIZMAN'S PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER. POLCOUNS, FOR

EXAMPLE, NOTED THAT AMONG SOME TEN ISRAELI JOURNALISTS HE MET DURING PAST SIX WEEKS, ONE OF FEW SUBJECTS ON WHICH ALL AGREED WAS THAT WEIZMAN WAS A SINCERE, STRAIGHTFORWARD AND LIKEABLE PERSON.

2. WE DOUBT THAT EGYPTIANS ARE CONSCIOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO SPLIT ISRAELI CABINET OR INFLUENCE ISRAELI ELECTORATE BY SHOWING PREFERENCE FOR WEIZMAN OVER BEGIN AND DAYAN. SADAT, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN BE IN NO DOUBT ABOUT WEIZMAN'S LOYALTY TO ISRAEL AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITIONS AFTER JANUARY 11 MEETING IN ASWAN WHEN WEIZMAN WAS APPARENTLY VERY ROUGH IN PRESENTING GOI POSITION ON SETTLEMENTS. AT SAME TIME, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT EGYPTIAN LEADERS BELIEVE WEIZMAN IS FLEXIBLE AND FRANK IN HIS DEALINGS WITH THEM. WE DOUBT THAT THEY BELIEVE HE IS LESS POLITICALLY ASTUTE THAN BEGIN. IF THERE IS POLITICAL PURPOSE BEHIND PREFERENCE FOR WEIZMAN, IT COULD IN OUR OPINION BE EGYPTIAN ATTEMPT TO HIGHLIGHT WHAT THEY CONSIDER "INTRANSIGENCE" AND "DEVIIOUSNESS" OF BEGIN BY CONTRASTING HIM WITH "FLEXIBILITY" AND "SINCERITY" OF WEIZMAN.

3. THIS PREFERENCE FOR WEIZMAN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN PRESS, MOST RECENTLY BY AKHBAR EDITOR MOUSSA SABRY WHO ON JANUARY 23 PRAISED WEIZMAN IN SHARP CONTRAST TO HIS CRITICISM OF BEGIN. SABRY QUOTED WEIZMAN AS TELLING HIM THAT HE HAS BROUGHT HIS SON, WHO WAS INJURED IN OCTOBER

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 02960 270309Z

WAR, TO MEET EGYPTIANS SO THAT HE WOULD KNOW THEY ARE HUMAN BEINGS LIKE HIM. WEIZMAN ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID PERSONAL CONTACTS WILL SOLVE ALL PROBLEMS. "I ASSURE YOU I CAME TO LIKE GENERAL GAMASY AND I CAME CLOSER TO HIM EACH DAY, SO MUCH SO THAT I AM AFRAID TO GIVE IN TO HIM WHEN WE TALK BUSINESS. I AM AFRAID HE WILL TAKE EVERYTHING FROM ME."

4. IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THIS MUTUAL ADMIRATION SOCIETY, DAYAN HAS BEEN ODD MAN OUT. LONG BEFORE HIS PEACE INITIATIVE, SADAT CONSIDERED DAYAN AS THE ONLY FLEXIBLE MAN IN THE ISRAELI CABINET. HOWEVER, THIS VIEW PALLED A BIT FOLLOWING DAYAN-TUHAMI TALKS IN DECEMBER IN RABAT. SADAT STILL THINKS WELL OF DAYA, THOUGH LATTER'S PERSONALITY MAKES HIM LESS ATTRACTIVE TO EGYPTIANS THAN THE GREGARIOUS WEIZMAN. PROBLEM WITH DAYAN IS THAT CAMARADERIE WHICH COULD QUICKLY DEVELOP BETWEEN WEIZMAN AND GAMASY ON PROFESSIONAL BASIS, THERE IS NOTHING COMPARABLE ON MFA SIDE. KAMEL AND GHALI MAY RESPECT DAYAN, BUT ALSO FEEL INFERIOR TO HIM. NEVERTHELESS, EGYPTIANS WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH DAYAN.

5. COMMENT. IN SHORT, WE BELIEVE EGYPTIAN LOVE AFFAIR
WITH WEIZMAN IS MUCH TOO TRANSPARENT TO BE SERIOUS
POLITICAL EFFORT TO SPLIT ISRAELI CABINET. TOO EARLY TO
TELL WHERE REPORTED SADAT INVITATION TO ABBA EBAN MIGHT
FIT INTO ABOVE EVALUATION. EITLS

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